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REPORT ON INTERROGATION OF OBERREGIERUNGSRAT NIKOLAI ROHEN, HEAD OF ANGLO-AMERICAN SECTION OF OKW/CHI.

Attached is a report on the interrogation of NIKOLAI ROHEN, Head of Referat B.6, of OKW/Chi. The interrogation was carried out at Berlin on 25th September, 1946, by Mr. K.L. PERRIN of L.S.I.C. and Lieut. MARY C. LANE, U.S. Army.

2. ROHEN seemed to be of low-powered intellect and the interrogation was generally disappointing; this report adds nothing of importance to our knowledge of German successes but is of value in that it fills in some of the detail and confirms information obtained from other sources.

TICOM
22nd October, 1946.

No. of Pages: 3.
Copy No: 9.

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REPORT ON INTERROGATION OF OBERREGIERUNGSRAT NIKOLAI ROHEN, HEAD OF ANGLO-AMERICAN SECTION OF OKW/CHI, AT BERLIN ON 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1946, BY MR. K.L. PERRIN AND LIEUT. MARY C. LANE.

NIKOLAI ROHEN joined OKW/Chi as a clerk in 1921 and by the beginning of the war had risen to be head of the Anglo-U.S. Referat, with the rank of Oberregierungsrat. He was born in Riga of a German father and American mother. He is a Catholic, non-Nazi, and stated that he hoped to fight against the Russians. Since the war, he has been working as a gardener in American employment. He is of unprepossessing appearance, and seems to be of low-powered intellect. He stated that he had had no previous interrogation, although in May 1945 he was overrun by the Russians.

In 1921, OKW/Chi consisted of 15-20 people. At the beginning of the war, ROHEN was in charge of about 12 people, and by 1945 this had risen to 35.

He wrote down the following as the only codes read by his section during the war :-

British: G.T.C.
Irish G.T.C. with letter substitution.

American: W.D.Telegraph Code.
Green Code.
Gray Code.
Brown Code.
A3 with letter bigram substitution.
C1 with letter bigram substitution.
Military Intelligence Code with letter substitution.
Military (? Attache) with letter substitution.
Strip system.

He remembered the following captured material :-

British: R. Code.
4-figure subtractor tables.
G.T.C.
Various commercial codes.
All from the Consulate at Bergen.

American: Brown Code.
Gray Code.
A3 Code, all from the Japanese.
Military Intelligence Code.
Attache Code; both from the Italians.

British Cyphers: ROHEN insisted that G.T.C. was the only British code read by OKW/Chi, and that secret diplomatic messages passed in machine or in 4-figure subtractor systems were never solved. They had attempted to break into the figure traffic by writing messages out in depth, but never achieved any positive results, in the last two years, the same key was never used twice, and no further investigations were made. He knew that the Luftwaffe had solved a British figure subtractor system, but OKW had never succeeded.

He remembered traffic prefixed DIGIT and PRODROME. When asked about messages with prefix INTER, he said that there had been a good deal of such traffic, but it had never been solved.

They had tried to work on the captured material, but never found any messages to fit the recyphering tables; he remembered that one of these was marked "L", but was not aware that any had been received from the Japanese; KETTLER and FENNER were the only people to have dealings with Japan.

He had heard of Inter-Departmental Cypher, but knew nothing about it; traffic was exchanged with OKH, but he had no personal liaison with OKH and and knew nobody there. Asked about traffic with VCVCV type indicators, he was very vague and thought it might be an American system.

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He had no recollection of British double transposition but said they had worked on American double transposition with no success. They sometimes decyphered traffic on Bentley's Code, but they were always commercial messages of no interest; he was unaware that Bentley's had ever been used recyphered.

No messages of a secret or tactical nature were ever passed on G.T.C., and he could remember no highlights; he maintained, however, that traffic was worth decyphering for the sake of background. He remembered that before the war they had begun to solve a South African codebook, with prefix SALEG; some progress was made, but there was little material, and the work was dropped.

American Cyphers: The most important success of his section was the solution of the W.D. Military Attache system, which was used by the Military Attache of Cairo until 1943. "In 1942, Chi received from the Italians the Military Intelligence Code and Attache Code with some recyphering tables, which changed at first every two months and later at shorter intervals. The main traffic was between Cairo and the War Department at Washington. In 2-4 weeks we succeeded in breaking the new tables, so that the Military Attache reports on the North African campaign could be read currently, until this system was replaced by a cypher machine. The V.N's were sent as quickly as possible (by telephone) to Marshal ROMMEL".

The Military Attache Code was used from 1919 until 1940, but messages were always unimportant. The strip system was solved by FRANZ in HUETTENHAIN's section, and ROHEN merely handled the decoding; it was solved when the same strips were sent to different places, or when they were carelessly used. They also read a system with ten bigram substitution tables, which used a new table after every 20-25 letters. They had more success with American than with British diplomatic cyphers.

Machines: ROHEN had never been inside HUETTENHAIN's machine section, but believed that the British machine was never solved either by OKW or OKH, although he would not swear that an occasional success might not have been achieved under favourable circumstances. They did not solve the American electrical machine. They worked on these machines in (?) 1942-1943, but he thinks that he would have heard if they had been successful, and that decyphered traffic would have come to him for issuing. He did not know HARMS, and thought that nothing had been captured in North Africa. A British machine without wheels was captured, he thought, at Bergen, and HUETTENHAIN must have used this in his attempts to break traffic; some messages might have been read, but he would certainly have known about any current success.

He knew nothing about Secret Teleprinters; he remembered the name Enigma, and thought it might have been used by the Germans.

There was a section in OKW/Chi working exclusively on Agents' traffic, and the head of this section was an Austrian Oberregierungsrat; he knew nothing about their work; but he knew that the work of the Polish Section on London-Warsaw traffic was considered very important.

Asked about OSCHMANN, he said that he was the Head of the Department 1932-1936, but he did not know what had become of him. He believed BUSCHENHAGEN was a witness at NUREMBERG.

They had exchanged all their results with the Foreign Office, but with no other department. ZASTROW was his opposite in the Foreign Office, and ZASTROW had also tried to break PRODROME messages in the earlier days; after several months, he had achieved some results, but never had any positive success.

Although ROHEN was very vague in his replies, and the interrogation was generally unsatisfactory, interrogators had no reason to suspect that he was hiding the truth. It seems likely that he was given very little information on subjects not concerned with the work of his own section.

ROHEN has now returned to gardening.